

CHARLES DAVID AND ALICE  
JANE WAGSTAFF THACKER



Charles David Thacker was born on November 28, 1883, at Buysville, Utah, son of Charles E. and Maria Price Thacker. He married Alice Jane Wagstaff on February 22, 1906. She was the daughter of Heber Jonathan and Sarah M. Shelley Wagstaff and was born December 31, 1884, at American Fork.

As soon as Dave could straddle a horse he had one, which he used to bring the cows home from the hills. Horses and oxen were Dave's pet hobby, always enjoying working with them to break them in.

When five years old, he ran away to school so often the teacher let him come and join the other students who ranged in

age from five to 20 years. In some rural one-room schools, students up to 20 years attended, but not too many. He remembered one experience with a skunk that caused the teacher to send him home for a change of clothes. He rode to Charleston to school when he was in the seventh grade. His schooling ended for three years when his father moved to Wyoming. Three or four years later they sent him back to go on in school. He was 19.

Everyone walked, sometimes miles, to parties, entertainments, Mutual and Church in those days. In Wyoming the young fellows rode horses to take girls to the dances. There were many non-Mormons in Wyoming who were prejudiced against the Mormons, causing trouble around Ft. Bridger and Lyman.

When Dave was 20, in February, 1903, his father took a contract (on another man's word) to supply ties to a new rail line over a mountain. They had to be cut by ax, hewed and delivered on railroad grade. A group of 14 or 16 left Wasatch with their teams to skid and haul the ties. They got to Bridal Veil Falls at noon and found a huge snowslide. They camped for dinner, then doubled teams and got wagons over. They arrived at the camping place at the depot by evening. In the morning all were loaded on the train and shipped to Mack, Colorado. Arriving there, the horses were unloaded and put in a field to feed. Dave's best horse had his leg broken when he was kicked, so it had to be shot.

They started for their working place, but had alkali water to contend with. However, a surveying party supplied them with good water. After two days they reached the company commissary and drew the supplies needed, then were off to the mountains. The place was badly represented. The timber was red pine, scattered up the ledges where horses couldn't get, and with hard trees to cut and handle. All were experienced timber workers, but decided they could make nothing there, so piled what they had drawn from the commissary, covered it with a tarp and struck out through the country for Vernal. All they had to eat on the three-day trek to Green River was flour and water stirred together and baked in a fry pan with a little bacon. At Green River they were offered a ride across on ferry

395

396

HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

boats, because Bill Smith and Jake Stills knew the ferry men and told of their plight. It cost \$1 per team and 25 cents per man to cross otherwise. At Jensen they stopped at Joe Smith's. They tried to find work, but weren't successful, so some started home by way of Indian Canyon to Price. Strawberry was snowed in.

Dave found work at the St. Louis Giltsonite mine, two miles east of Ft. Duchesne, then to the Pariette mine, south of Myton. It was a wet mine and Dave became sick. Left there, and at White Rocks went to work for the man he worked for the year before. His wife was half-breed, so he could get contracts from the Indian department. Dave cut cord wood from yellow pine, knotty, gummy stuff, and then hauled to Ft. Duchesne, 20 miles away, with four horses. His father worked at the Pariette mine and then found work hauling water from Myton to the mine.

When they left for home they fixed up a six-horse outfit with two wagons and picked up a load of wool at Starvation to haul to Provo to the woolen mills. Heber sheepmen had wool at Starvation and Currant Creek. Received meager supplies at Ft. Duchesne, which had to last until they reached Heber. There were no towns in between.

Dave was 22 and Alice 21 when they were married. He fell in love with Alice when she was a little girl. He saw her the first time in Sunday School. He depended on working with his three yoke of oxen he had broken for all kinds of farm work and to make a living with, and worked with his father in sawmill work.

After he was married he worked in different organizations in the Church, as Sunday School teacher, in superintendency, as counselor in Sunday School, as president of YMMIA, and president of Elders' Quorum. Dave was active in dramatics for 20 years, and was an exceptionally fine actor even after he became deaf. He was head of the amusement board for a time, played baseball and loved to dance. He and Alice are fine waltzers, taking prizes on three different occasions.

Dave and his father bought a sawmill from Robert Turner, Robert Forman and Ed Clyde—the old John Turner mill in Daniels Canyon, above McGuire Canyon. They

logged all winter in deep snow and came in every night wet to the waist and with their clothes frozen stiff on them. They moved the mill from here to Strawberry Valley, east of the Hub Ranger Station, where Dave and Alice spent their first summer together; then to Sugar Spring. A fellow from Green River came and wanted two timbers, 40 feet long and 18 inches square. Dave made a road up Dry Hollow, found a tree that would make these timbers, and he tells how he got it out for the man with his oxen. The timbers were for the sides of a ferry. They moved to Clyde Creek.

Then Dave was appointed an RFD mail carrier on a 20-mile route, which he traveled with horses the year round. He used a horse and cart, sometimes a horse and buggy, or a sleigh. Sometimes the snow was so deep he would use a pack horse to break the trail. He broke a number of horses for other people on this job, which he held for eight years.

His father bought another mill and two yoke of oxen from Senator Gardner of Spanish Fork and won a contract to furnish the timbers from the East Portal to the West Portal of the Strawberry tunnel. Alf Shelton drove for them.

That fall a moving picture company came from Hollywood to make a picture called "A Hundred Years of Mormonism." They used, as a stage, the part of Wasatch from Charleston, along the hills and over across Daniel, stopping for fiddling and dancing where Clifford and Delores McDonald's farm is. They used all of Thacker's oxen, a number of horse teams and 20 to 30 single hands, men and women, for about 10 days. Everyone enjoyed it so much. Saw the picture later, and their part was very good. About 1919 they lived at Bluebell on the reservation three years.

In 1902, Dave worked with the Indians at White Rock. He learned to understand them and speak some words, which he enjoyed doing.

Dave continued his sawmill work and farmed. He had a farm in Vineyard which the Geneva Steel Co. purchased. He was in the dairy business at Wallsburg and ran range cattle. He sold that and bought a ranch on lower Lake Creek. They make their home in Heber.

Alice has always been an ardent Church

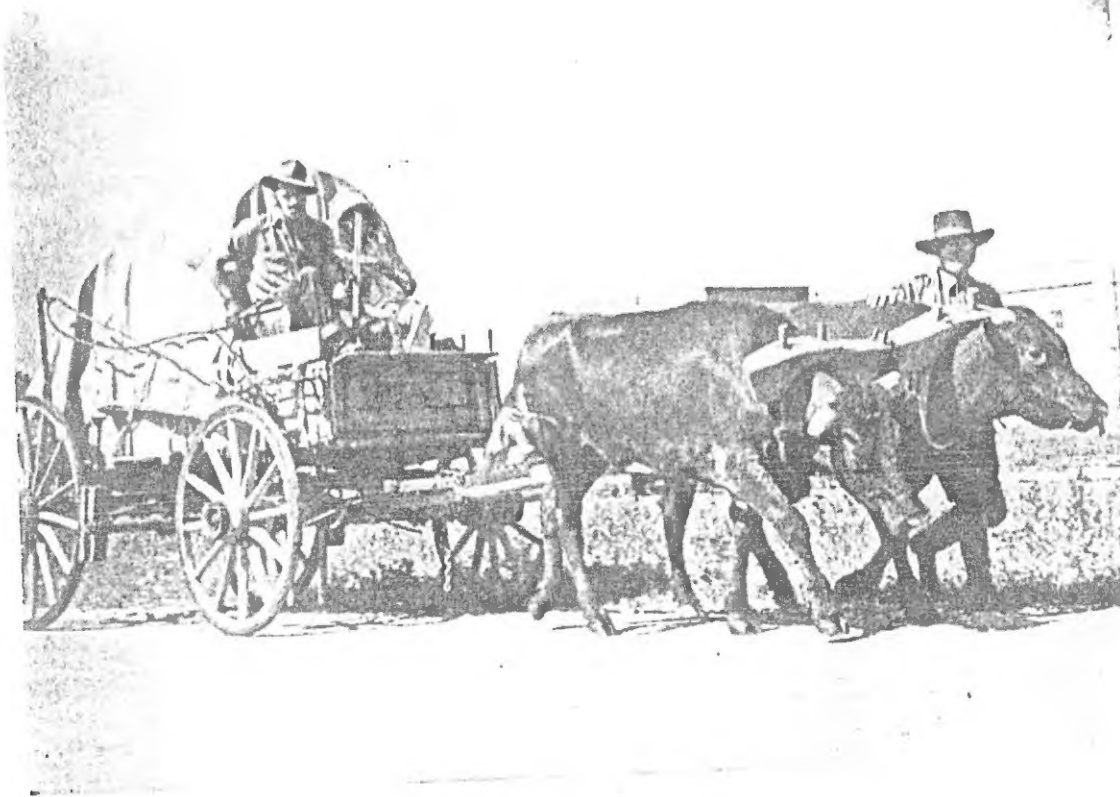
over →

#### DANIEL BIOGRAPHIES

worker and a very wonderful mother. She is very proficient with all kinds of beautiful handwork. She helps a great deal in the American Legion and in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Their children are: LaPrele, Ida A., Leila Marie, Lois Thacker, Charles Heber, Van Ness, Luella, Mae, Floyd Verl, Carma Ann, Lowell David and Lyle Vern.

The mills were first run with water power from the creeks but later steam was introduced. Logging was done with oxen, and it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of these animals in the pioneering venture. They were particularly valuable in lumbering. Here they were preferred even over horses. They were steady and not easily excited. Where horses, when pulling a heavy load would saw back and forth or would balk, the oxen would steady down and pull harder and harder. Oxen could get over the logs easier and could go



Freighting by oxen

## CHARLES EDWIN AND MARIA PRICE THACKER

Charles Edwin Thacker was born August 18, 1862, in Salt Lake City, son of William and Rachel Tonks Thacker. He married Maria Rawlins Price on November 29, 1882, in the Endowment House, ceremony by Daniel H. Wells. She was born August 22, 1864, at Ash Hollow, Nebraska, in a wagon on the way to Utah, daughter of James and

## BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS



Ann Powell Price Jr. Charles died June 8, 1933, and Maria died July 28, 1937, at Charleston.

His parents homesteaded at Smithfield, in Cache Valley, and in Summit County before coming to Wasatch County in 1871, where they took up a homestead in Buysville.

Charles often told of herding their cattle on the grassy hills near Daniel and other chores performed by pioneer children.

When he was 19 years old he became very ill and had to have a lot of nursing. One of those who helped was Maria Rawlins Price, a lovely brown-haired girl with beautiful brown eyes. She was a daughter of James Price Jr. and Ann Powell, and was born while her parents were coming to Utah in a wagon train. The train stopped in Ash Hollow, Nebraska, long enough for her to make her appearance on August 22, 1864, and then wound on the long journey to Great Salt Lake Valley. She was named Maria Rawlins for the captain of the wagon train, Joseph S. Rawlins.

Maria and Charles were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City by Daniel H. Wells, on November 29, 1882. They lived in Buysville several years, where Charles farmed and worked at various jobs available. He was fond of working with oxen and was a great trader in horses, mules, oxen and range cattle, and always had some around. He owned and worked 10 yoke of oxen (two head) at one time. He took timber contracts at the Park City mines when they were booming, camping there for two or three summers in the mountains above Park City, and furnished timbers for the mines, along with other men from Heber.

He had a deep love for the mountains, so he bought a shingle mill and took his little family to the mountains to run it.

## DANIEL BIOGRAPHIES

Many of the shingles on the homes in Heber Valley came from his mill. He had an interest in a business in the Teton Basin in Idaho at one time, but he always returned to Wasatch.

Charles and his brother Fred bought a ranch on Blacks Fork, Wyoming, at one-half interest apiece, that Dr. Brewster, doctor at Ft. Bridger when the soldiers were there, had bought and built a large two-family home on. Mrs. Charlie Handley of Ogden owned the ranch and had been leasing it out. Charles also owned and operated a sawmill on Sage Creek, Wyo., west and north over the mountains from Henrys Fork. He took a contract from the Bell Telephone Co. to furnish 30 miles of poles from Carter Station on the Union Pacific Railroad to Lone Tree, Wyo. It was a big job, red pine poles 25 feet long and 8 inches at the tip. The poles had to be cut and peeled by hand with axes. It was grueling work. Took two years for that job along with the sawmilling. This was the first telephone line in that country. Messages were delivered by horseback until the line was put in.

His own son, Dave, hauled more of those poles than anyone else, with four horses. Scattered them along the entire 30 miles. Fifty-five years later, in the fall of 1958 Dave visited this line and some of those poles are still standing. Some have been braced and some replaced.

After returning from Wyoming he owned and operated a sawmill in Daniels Canyon and Strawberry Valley.

In 1899, they were living in Charleston when the railroad came to Wasatch County. The right of way went through the home of Charles and Maria's, or "Aunt Nina's," as she was affectionately called. The railroad company bought their property and they went to Bridger, Wyoming, where they purchased Fred's one half of the ranch on Black's Fork. After about four years they sold their ranch in Wyoming and returned to Charleston in 1903 where they began sawmilling in Daniel Canyon.

These people were good, kindly people and they gave many a weary traveler a meal and a bed. They also took care of their aging parents and raised several children besides their own large family of 13, 10 of whom they reared to maturity. They were beloved by all who knew them, especially their children and grandchildren.

They engaged in ranching and stock raising in the Uintah Basin from 1916 to 1921 after which they again returned to Charleston where they lived until their deaths. Charles suffered a stroke in the early summer of 1933. He was buried in Charleston cemetery. Maria died four years later, on July 28, 1937, and she was laid beside her beloved husband.

Their children are: Charles David, Rachel Ann, Tessie Maria, William Price, Leah Charlotte, Rawlins, Olive Millie, Hazel, George Angus, Ray Alvin, Isabelle, Eva and Grant.